

Doctor of Laws, honoris causa

February 25, 1999

Treasurer,

It is my very great privilege to introduce to you The Honourable Louise Arbour and ask you, Treasurer on behalf of the Law Society of Upper Canada, to confer upon her the degree of Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa.

Madam Justice Arbour is a graduate of the University of Montreal. In 1970 she was a law clerk to Mr. Justice Louise Philippe Pigeon in the Supreme Court of Canada. She later became a highly regarded Professor of Criminal Law at Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto and remained there until she accepted an appointment to the then Trial Division of the Ontario Supreme Court in 1987. In recognition of her obvious talents, she was elevated to the Ontario Court of Appeal in March of 1990 where she served with distinction until October of 1996, when, in what can only be described as an incredible act of courage and determination, she took leave from the Court of Appeal to become chief prosecutor for the International War Crimes Tribunal at the Hague.

A few short weeks ago our television screens were filled with the image of Justice Arbour attempting to enter Kosovo to investigate a reported massacre of ethnic Albanians. Since 1996 she has investigated some of history's most horrific atrocities both in the former Yugoslavia and in the Central African Republic of Rwanda. She has had to deal with events that stagger the imagination and would make a stone weep. Above all, she has established the credibility of the War Crimes Tribunals and is in her own special way moving the world ever closer to the establishment of a permanent international criminal court. The evidence of human barbarity to which Justice Arbour has become witness cannot be imagined.

That she has preserved her dignity & composure and has forcefully pursued her goals in spite of enormous difficulties is a tribute to her courage. She is most deserving of the honour of the degree Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa.